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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, May 17, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOW NOT TO REDUCE." Facts from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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"How Not to Reduce" is the subject of today's report from the Federal Food and Drug Administration.

If you are looking for an easy, quick, over-night method of reducing, this report is not for you. Our Washington correspondent has no patience with ladies who seek to beautify their too ample figures with freak diets, powerful laxatives, or certain dangerous drugs.

She writes: "There seems to be a turn for the better, in reducing circles. On my desk are two news items -- one from a girls' school in the East, the other from Hollywood. Here's the one from the East:

"Twenty-five. . . girls, pink-cheeked and buxom, did deep-knee bends and what-not today in the university's first reducing class. (The) head of the women's physical education department said: "This course is designed to do away with foolish dieting practices, and provide a sane means of reducing."

"And here's the news item from Hollywood, written by a popular columnist: 'I think there should be a warning sign near every graveyard to this effect: Beware of diets. I wish there were space to name the dozens of prominent actresses who have practically wrecked their insides in desperate struggles to keep thin and willowy. Some of our ladies have become so thin they are actually scrawny, and nature never intended that. . . Today actresses are fighting to gain weight, because so many emaciated their bodies to the danger point. . . The best diet, offered of late by at least two dependable conditioners, is this: Plenty of sleep, lots of sunshine, daily exercise, and get up from every meal not quite full.'

"Next," continues our correspondent with the Food and Drug Administration, "let me quote from a book published by the American Medical Association of Chicago:

"'Everywhere today one finds advertisements of cures and treatments that are warranted to turn stylish stouts into sylphs. If these anti-fat preparations, drugs or combination treatments were simple humbugs that did not affect the public health, physicians might ignore them. Unfortunately, most of the alleged short cuts from obesity to lissomeness are actually or

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potentially harmful to health, and some of them are even threats to life itself. While it may sound brutal, it is nevertheless a fact that nearly every person who is overweight reaches that condition because of overeating and underexercising. . . It is to these that the exploiters of alleged reducing cures appeal. . .'

"The author goes on to describe some of the alleged obesity cures. They include reducing breads, food-powders, pastes, soaps, bath powders, chewing gums, pills, liquids, salts -- and the dangerous product called 'Slim,' listed by the Federal Food and Drug Administration as a dinitrophenol (dye-nye-tro-fee-nul) product, and now removed from the market."

The next quotation in today's series of quotes is from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, which states that:

"All the fat-reducing preparations on the market today may be roughly classified into three groups.

"In the first group are those that reduce by starvation -- the preparations that contain nothing but wholesome food substances, pleasantly flavored, usually sold in small containers for a dollar or more. The directions usually accompanying these high-priced fat-reducers tell you to do without breakfast and lunch, and replace these meals with a glass of liquid made by dissolving a teaspoonful or so of the product in a glass of water. Obviously if a person decreases the amount of food he eats, a reduction in weight will almost always result.

"The second group of fat-reducing products includes those which contain powerful laxative drugs. They may have some limited fat-reducing action, by rushing the food through the body so rapidly that it does not have an opportunity to be digested and absorbed. The continued use of purgative drugs is not calculated to improve the health of the user. On the contrary, serious injury may result.

"The third group of reducing preparations includes such dangerous drugs as dinitrophenol (dye-nye-tro-fee-nul), and other products which speed up the burning of the body fat to the point where the fatty tissue is actually utilized. Drugs in this class include thyroid, as well as dinitrophenol. Those substances are extremely dangerous, and have caused a great deal of serious harm. They should never be used except under the direction of a competent physician, who can carefully regulate the dosage and watch their effect.

"Since the present federal Food and Drugs Act does not now have jurisdiction over products of this type, dangerous though they may be, all that the Food and Drug Administration can do at present is to warn the public that they are dangerous."

Today's report concludes with this statement: "It's up to the consumer to read carefully all labels on so-called fat-reducing preparations, to avoid preparations he knows to be harmful, or about which he knows nothing, and when in doubt, to consult a physician."

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